

CLAIMS

1. (currently amended) Process for shifting sour gas portions ~~from~~ contained in a natural gas (1) from a first sour gas separation unit (2) to a further sour gas separation unit (22) with free capacities, characterized in that comprising:

- a portion of sour gas is ~~withdrawn~~ removed from the first natural gas stream (3) with a sour gas content,
- the sour gas (20) removed from the first natural gas stream is ~~sent~~ fed to a further sour gas separation unit (22), and
- the feed operation to the further sour gas separation unit (22) is effected in such a manner that the sour gas removed from the first natural gas stream (20) is mixed with at least one 2nd natural gas stream (21) and that this mixture is piped to ~~at least one more~~ the further sour gas separation unit (22).

2. (currently amended) Process for shifting sour gas portions contained in a natural gas (1) from a first sour gas separation unit (2) to a further sour gas separation unit (22) with free capacities in accordance with the Claim 1, ~~characterized in that~~ wherein the separation removal of the sour gas contained in the first natural gas stream (3) is effected by absorption (4) as follows:

- ~~The~~ the sour gas portion to be separated is removed from the first natural gas stream (3), using a chemically ~~active~~ non-active adsorbent (5);
- laden absorbent (11) is recycled to the head of the desorption unit (15);
- the sour gas ~~desorpted~~ desorbed by the desorption unit (15) leaves this unit and is admixed to a second natural gas stream (21).

3. (currently amended) Process for shifting sour gas portions contained in a natural gas (1) from a first sour gas separation unit (2) to a further sour gas separation unit (22) with free capacities according to Claim 2, ~~characterized in that~~ wherein a natural gas stream (16) that is at least partly purified is fed as stripping gas to the bottom of the desorption unit (15), the stripping gas and the desorbed sour gas (20) being jointly admixed to the second natural gas stream (21) and the desorption unit (15) being designed as stripping column.

4. (currently amended) Process for shifting sour gas portions contained in a natural gas (1) from a first sour gas separation unit (2) to a further sour gas separation unit (22) with free capacities according to Claim 3, ~~characterized in that~~ wherein the desorption unit (15) can be operated at a pressure level that permits the mixture of desorbed sour gas and stripping gas (20) to be added without compression to natural gas stream (21) which is piped to the further sour gas separation unit (22) with a free capacity for sour gas separation.

5. (currently amended) Process for shifting sour gas portions contained in a natural gas (1) from a first sour gas separation unit (2) to a further sour gas separation unit (22) with free capacities according to Claim 4, ~~characterized in that~~ wherein laden absorbent (11) is heated prior to entering sour gas absorption unit (15).

6. (currently amended) Process for shifting sour gas portions contained in a natural gas (1) from a first sour gas separation unit (2) to a further sour gas separation unit (22) with free capacities according to Claim 2, ~~characterized in that~~ wherein laden absorbent (11) is flashed in desorption unit (15) which in this particular case would be designed as a flash vessel.

7. (currently amended) Process for shifting sour gas portions contained in a natural gas (1) from a first sour gas separation unit (2) to a further sour gas separation unit (22) with free capacities according to Claim 6, ~~characterized in that~~ wherein laden absorbent (11) is heated prior to entering desorption unit (15), desorption unit (15) being operated at a pressure level that permits flashed sour gas (20) to be added without compression to natural gas stream (21) which is piped to the further sour gas separation unit (22) with a free capacity for sour gas separation.

8. (new) Process for shifting sour gas portions contained in a natural gas (1) from a first sour gas separation unit (2) to a further sour gas separation unit (22) with free capacities in accordance with Claim 1, wherein:

the sour gas (20) removed from the first natural gas stream is fed to at least two or more further sour gas separation units; and

the feed operation to the further gas separation units is effected in such a manner that the sour gas removed from the first natural gas stream (20) is mixed with at least two or more natural gas streams and that these mixtures are piped to the two or more further gas separation units.

9. (new) Process_for shifting sour gas portions contained in a natural gas (1) from a first sour gas separation unit (2) to a further sour gas separation unit (22) with free capacities in accordance with Claim 2, wherein:

the sour gas (20) removed from the first natural gas stream is fed to at least two or more further sour gas separation units; and

the feed operation to the further gas separation units is effected in such a manner that the sour gas removed from the first natural gas stream (20) is mixed with at least two or more natural gas streams and that these mixtures are piped to the two or more further gas separation units.

10. (new) Process_for shifting sour gas portions contained in a natural gas (1) from a first sour gas separation unit (2) to a further sour gas separation unit (22) with free capacities in accordance with Claim 3, wherein:

the sour gas (20) removed from the first natural gas stream is fed to at least two or more further sour gas separation units; and

the feed operation to the further gas separation units is effected in such a manner that the sour gas removed from the first natural gas stream (20) is mixed with at least two or more natural gas streams and that these mixtures are piped to the two or more further gas separation units.

11. (new) Process_for shifting sour gas portions contained in a natural gas (1) from a first sour gas separation unit (2) to a further sour gas separation unit (22) with free capacities in accordance with Claim 4, wherein:

the sour gas (20) removed from the first natural gas stream is fed to at least two or more further sour gas separation units; and

the feed operation to the further gas separation units is effected in such a manner that the sour gas removed from the first natural gas stream (20) is mixed with at least two or more natural gas streams and that these mixtures are piped to the two or more further gas separation units.

12. (new) Process_for shifting sour gas portions contained in a natural gas (1) from a first sour gas separation unit (2) to a further sour gas separation unit (22) with free capacities in accordance with Claim 5, wherein:

the sour gas (20) removed from the first natural gas stream is fed to at least two or more further sour gas separation units; and

the feed operation to the further gas separation units is effected in such a manner that the sour gas removed from the first natural gas stream (20) is mixed with at least two or more natural gas streams and that these mixtures are piped to the two or more further gas separation units.

13. (new) Process_for shifting sour gas portions contained in a natural gas (1) from a first sour gas separation unit (2) to a further sour gas separation unit (22) with free capacities in accordance with Claim 6, wherein:

the sour gas (20) removed from the first natural gas stream is fed to at least two or more further sour gas separation units; and

the feed operation to the further gas separation units is effected in such a

manner that the sour gas removed from the first natural gas stream (20) is mixed with at least two or more natural gas streams and that these mixtures are piped to the two or more further gas separation units.

14. (new) Process_for shifting sour gas portions contained in a natural gas (1) from a first sour gas separation unit (2) to a further sour gas separation unit (22) with free capacities in accordance with Claim 7, wherein:

the sour gas (20) removed from the first natural gas stream is fed to at least two or more further sour gas separation units; and

the feed operation to the further gas separation units is effected in such a manner that the sour gas removed from the first natural gas stream (20) is mixed with at least two or more natural gas streams and that these mixtures are piped to the two or more further gas separation units.